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News Release

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Redby couple plead guilty to second-degree murder charges

MINNEAPOLIS – B. Todd Jones, United States Attorney for the District of Minnesota, announced that a couple from Redby have pleaded guilty to murdering a 21-year-old man on the Red Lake Indian Reservation on October 1, 2009. Appearing today before U.S. District Court Judge Donovan Frank in St. Paul, Kelly James Maxwell, age 28, pled guilty to one count of aiding and abetting murder in the second degree. Natalie Renee Delores Ann Smith, age 23, pled guilty to the same charge on March 18, 2010. Maxwell and Smith were indicted on November 10, 2009.

In their plea agreements, Maxwell and Smith admitted they aided each other in the murder of Curtis Leslie Charles Heinonen. According to a Federal Bureau of Investigation affidavit, Heinonen's unclothed body was found under some logs in the yard of a Redby residence. Officers discovered shoes, pants, and boxer-shorts two blocks away, in Smith's yard.

For their crimes, Maxwell and Smith face a potential maximum penalty of life in prison. Judge Frank will determine their sentences at a future date, yet to be scheduled. The federal government has primary law enforcement jurisdiction over the Red Lake Indian Reservation. Thus, this case is the result of an investigation by the Red Lake Tribal Police Department and the FBI. It is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Clifford B. Wardlaw.